"Sometimes the Eskimos preserve all the bones that have contained marrow -- the vertebrae, ribs, leg and feet bones -- pound them to fragments, and boil them slowly over an open fire. The fat that separates out on the surface is skimmed off with a ladle of musk-ox horn and poured into some convenient receptacle, such as a bag or the pericardium of the caribou, where it solidifies to form a pure white tallow. This is esteemed more highly perhaps than any other food the natives possess. Mr. Stefansson says that the Baillie island natives never boiled down the bones for their fat until the whaling ships came out and they were taught by natives from farther west; among the Copper Eskimos, however , it seems to have been done from time immemorial.

For drying meat the Copper Eskimo rests a pole or board on two pillars made by piling flat stones on top of one another, or by setting up large slabs on edge. The meat is cut into thin slices and laid across the pole. Often these racks will not suffice to hold the quantity that accumulates in the camp, and the meat lies littered about in every possible place, on sleds, on seal-skins, and even on boulders on the ground. The dogs are always kept tied up at this season, and nothing save the flies can molest the meat. Fish are treated in the same manner. About a week of warm, bright sunshine is sufficient to dry either meat or fish, but if the weather is unsettled and the sky overcast two or even three weeks may be required. The Copper Eskimo never learned to smoke his fish, as the Eskimos do farther west."

1: Jenness--104-105 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 251

"Fish that are intended for drying are slit from the anal fin to the anus, then from the gills along each side of the spine; finally they are severed at the root of the tail. This leaves the two sides hanging from the tail ready to be laid across a pole to dry, while the head remains attached to the spine. The [105] next step is to cut off the head for the daily meal, and to lay the spine out to dry on a stone or a seal-skin, together with any roe the fish may contain."

"The safest place for a cache is on an island close to shore, where foxes, wolves and wolverines cannot reach it in summer across the water. Wolverines, the most destructive of all the animals in the north, are fairly numerous at the mouth of the Coppermine river; consequently the natives of that region cache their goods on one of the Moore islands, and cross by sled to the mainland before the ice breaks up, which usually takes place some time in June. In the spring of 1914 some of the Noahognik Eskimos cached their possessions on Chantry island; and in 1916 Ikpakhuak and others used the island at the entrance of Bernard harbour for the same purpose. Ikpakhuak stored his blubber there while the ice was still solid, but left his clothing till June, when he ferried it across on his kayak. On the mainland the Eskimos choose as far as possible places that are least accessible to animals; for instance, in 1915, at Cape Wollaston, in Bathurst inlet, they left a cache on top of a huge crag so steep and high that not even a wolverine could scale its sides. Crags such as this, however, are rare, and most of the Eskimos' caches are simply built up with boulders, while articles of stone and wood, which cannot be damaged by beasts of prey, are left exposed on the surface. Thus in 1914 we found some caches of the Noahognik Eskimos at the fishing creek near Bernard harbour. There were four boards resting on the ground, and, on top of them, a soapstone lamp and a wooden bowl, the latter weighed down with stones to keep it from being blown away. Near them were three stone cairns. One enclosed

a large poke full of blubber; in the second we could see only a few sticks. The interior of the third was not visible at all, but inserted upright between the [122] stones were four sealing harpoons. A few yards away there were three coal-oil cans and a couple of sticks lying together on the ground. The sleds and heavy spring tents of these natives had been left at a lake a few miles inland.

Often the tribes partially break up as soon as their blubber caches are made, though the full disbandment does not take place till early summer. Many families even break off while the main body is still sealing on the ice, as there are many different hunting and fishing grounds, and every man is free to choose his own. In every region there are certain well-known highways that lead into the interior, and the native naturally makes his caches at the entrance to the one which leads to the particular district that he has chosen for his summer home; then in the fall he returns by the same route. The spring cache-sites therefore are often the same as the winter assembling-places. Thus the Akulliakattak natives cache their things at Lake Akulliakattak, and the Coppermine natives on one or other of the islands off the mouth of the Coppermine river. But in some tribal areas there is more than one highway into the interior, and so more than one potential cache-site. Different families will then make their caches in different places, so the group splits up while the natives are still living on the sea-ice. In the fall the families usually return first to their caches, then later, all unite in one common assembling-place."

2: Stefansson--52
116, 251, 185

(1908-1912) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"It is not common that more than a week's supply of meat accumulated in the village, but the supply of blubber steadily grows beyond what is needed for food and fuel, and often a family has seven to ten sealskins full of oil (fifteen hundred to three thousand pounds) to cache against the need of the next autumn, the period of scarcity."

2: Stefansson--54 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 251, 185

"In April no starvation came to our notice, though we found a Puiplirmiut village on short rations May 6, 1911, in Simpson Bay, Victoria Island. These had plenty of blubber, however. Each family lays by at this season as much blubber as it can. This is cut in small pieces and placed in bags made by skinning a seal through the mouth. Each of these bags when filled with oil will weigh one hundred seventy-five to two hundred fifty pounds and one good hunter will fill two or three such bags during March, April and May. When it comes time to go inland these are placed en cache, preferably on a small island. Be the caches on an island these are covered with large stones so as to be safe from bears; people, it is said, never steal from such caches. At the same place are also cached usually the winter lamps, the heavier stone pots, the winter clothing and all good clothes, and in fact everything that is not absolutely needed for the summer. On account of taboo restrictions no blubber is taken along inland."

2: Stefansson--56 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 251

"If fish are caught in large numbers [JMR: when they are fishing in early spring] they are often dried by being spread out on flat stones, hung up on deer antlers, etc., seldom on wooden racks, even when wood is available."

2; Stefansson--65 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 352, 251

"It is also common that a house has an alcove for storage purposes either built on to the house or excavated into the snowbank in which the house stands. This alcove is used chiefly for the storing of meat and blubber although other articles may be kept there as well. Sometimes these storage alcoves are built into the wall of the alleyway just outside of the door of the house in which case they have to be closed with snow blocks for the dogs of the family occupy the alleyway and would help themselves if unrestrained."

11: Stefansson--264-265 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 251, 185

"Fresh oil is not nearly so palatable or digestible as oil that has been allowed to fer-[265] ment in a sealskin bag through the summer, and besides that it is difficult often to get seals in the fall. By getting seals in the spring, therefore, they secure an agreeable article of diet for the coming autumn and provide themselves as well with a sort of insurance against hard luck in the fall hunt. Each family will in the spring be able to lay away from three to seven bags of oil. Such a bag consists of the whole skin of the common seal. The animal has been skinned through the mouth in such a way that the few necessary openings in the skin can be easily sewed up or tied up with a thong. This makes a bag which will hold about three hundred pounds of blubber, so that a single family's store of bil for the fall will run from nine hundred to two thousand pounds."

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

speak the white man's language and perform his intricate dances.

The performance ended at last, and the people began to disperse to their huts. Cockney, who was among the first to vanish, hastened to the station to describe my abnormal behaviour and organize a strong party that would bring me safely home. But before he had finished his narrative I myself arrived on the scene and offered a more reasonable explanation of my conduct.

The natives living out in the strait became very friendly again when the charge of murder was lifted from my head. I visited their settlement twice for periods of three or four days, staying each time with my old acquaintance, Ikpuck. The sun was now much higher in the sky, and a mildness in the atmosphere indicated the approach of spring. Snow-huts would soon be untenable; the slight melting of their ceilings around noon had already caused some of the people to move into large tents made of caribou skins. With the advent of longer days the hunters captured more seals, and the women were packing the surplus blubber into large bags to cache on the coast until autumn. Everything seemed to be changing. The various bands that had united in midwinter were separating out again and moving to different sealing-grounds; and every fortnight, as the new sealing-grounds became exhausted, they moved their settlements forward a few more miles.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

earlier, but the dogs were troublesome and the load heavier than I anticipated." 123 484

I questioned him about his route, for the two maps on which I relied, that of Rae, the Arctic explorer, and the chart of the British Admiralty, disagreed concerning this part of the coast. The chart had a deep inlet behind Cape Kendall which did not appear on Rae's map, while Rae (who named the cape Point Pullen) showed an island to the westward that was missing on the chart. Ikpuck's explanation, and my own observations later in the summer, revealed a landlocked bay that nearly severed Cape Kendall from the mainland; in portaging across the isthmus instead of following the coast, Ikpuck had shortened his journey by several miles. West of the point a long sandbar stretched out toward a high, rocky islet that harboured the remains of an ancient settlement. Both maps, then, were right; the full truth lay in combining them.

Our load of caribou fat was indeed heavy, for it had been lying in a cache eight months. It weighted not only the sled, but the surrounding atmosphere. I kept to windward of it, or well in front of the dogs, but distance seemed to make no appreciable difference. Ikpuck, on the contrary, sniffed the air with satisfaction, and nibbled small pieces of the fat as we marched along. When the provisions we had brought gave out that evening it furnished him both breakfast and supper. [251] [262]

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

with seal meat and hot tea. So ended our little journey, which began as a pleasant excursion, but developed, for me at least, into a rather toilsome march. Ikpuck was more accustomed to such vicissitudes, and thought the incident hardly worth mentioning.

We lingered a fortnight longer on the sea-ice, revelling in the mild weather of the Arctic spring. Day and night were hardly distinguishable, for the end of April saw the midnight sun. It mattered little whether we retired to our sleeping-bags at midnight or at noon; the night hours were preferable for travelling, because by 7 P.M. the melting slush of noon began to freeze again and the heavily laden sleds glided along more easily. When the days were warm and sunny a few seals emerged from their holes to bask on the surface of the ice, and in clear weather one or two herds of caribou marched steadily past us toward Victoria Island.

Slowly we too moved northward, travelling about twelve miles at a time, then halting for a week to allow the hunters to capture a few more seals, and their wives to accumulate more blubber. During one of these journeys my companions discovered a seal-hole covered as usual by the crust of snow. I thought it was nothing but the ordinary breathing-hole, about a foot in diameter, leading down to the water, and was lingering beside my sled, when Ikpuck called me over to examine it. Burrowed out in the snow alongside the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

Lake of Dancing, where we hoped to meet the Tormiat natives from the Great Sound. It was famous not on account of its size—it was even smaller than the lake we had just left—nor for its abundance of fish; but because it lay near the watershed on the highway to the Great Sound, and was encircled by many larger lakes that provided good fishing until midsummer. We set up our tents on one of several old camp-sites around its margin, and settled down to await the Tormiat.

During the next six days we scoured all the hills around us, discovering a few caribou, but no natives save two families that had separated from us on the ice a month before. On every excursion we were joined by Leaf, The Runner's wife, who had borrowed her husband's .22 rifle to shoot at ptarmigan. I lent her my own rifle on one occasion when we were stalking a herd of caribou, and she killed a magnificent bull, the finest we saw on Victoria Island. The other women devoted all their time to fishing, and to drying and caching the meat and fish that began to accumulate in camp.

Spring was now advancing rapidly; so much snow had melted from the hill-sides that sledding would soon be impossible. At times the temperature rose above 40° F., though it dropped below the freezing-point again at evening. Ptarmigan were mating in every hollow, and the children launched many an arrow at them with little success.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

easily on runners of steel. The Chatterbox and his family, who came next in the line, had abandoned their sled and hitched their dogs to a polar-bear skin that carried all their possessions. Last of all came Parted-Hair's sled, in the same condition as Ikpuck's. The Listener and his wife, too old to make unnecessary journeys, remained at the lake to watch over the meat and fish we had spread out on boulders to dry in the sun.

Twelve miles from the Lake of Dancing we sighted caribou and shot a large bull. We camped beside its carcass, and the women, who had failed to bring stone lamps and blubber, trusting to cook over open fires, searched the ridge-tops for fuel. But the season was less advanced on this side of the divide and vegetation scarcer, so that they found no fuel of any kind, not even the wretched dryad. I boiled a little venison for myself on the primus lamp, but the rest dined quite cheerfully on raw meat. Their tents, too, they had left behind, but they propped up two caribou robes for shelter from the breeze and spread out their sleeping-bags under the open sky. I fell asleep to the murmur of the dance-song they were practising for the meeting with the Tormiat from the Great Sound.

Big Lake, which we reached late the next evening, appeared to be circular in outline and about ten miles in diameter. We camped near its southern end, where we found old camp-sites, although the lake itself was silent and deserted.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

CHAPTER VIII

BREAD FROM THE WATERS

OUR meeting with the Tormiat from the Great Sound fulfilled one of the purposes for which I had shaken off civilization and adopted the Eskimo life. It is true that we encountered but two families, and those for four days only; but in customs and language they so closely resembled the natives with whom I was travelling that it was unnecessary to visit the remainder of the tribe. My companions had welcomed the journey as a pleasant break in the routine of their daily life. Now that it was ended they resumed their regular duty at this season, the drying and storing away of fish for the barren months of early winter.

The long Arctic spring was drawing to its close.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

Our party split up each morning and drifted in different directions, each person carrying a fishing outfit, and the men their hunting weapons. Nine or ten hours later the women straggled back with their fish, bearing also, in fine weather, loads of dryads to cook the evening meal. They cut off the heads of the fish for the cooking-pots, threw the backbones and fins to the dogs, and spread the bodies on boulders, or across horizontal poles to dry in the sun. The whole party then reassembled an hour or two before midnight, and, squatting outside the tents, gnawed the fish-heads, bone by bone, and discussed the day's adventures. The hungry dogs looked on with mournful eyes; tied to stones, they dined miserably on bones and broth.

I hunted, most of this period, to obtain caribou meat for my starving dog-team, but during a fortnight's steady tramping saw but two young bulls, which we consumed entirely in three days. The stony ridges cut to pieces my light sealskin boots, intended only for soft snow, and Icehouse, who had tried to patch them each evening, finally rebelled. "Stop hunting for a time," she said. "Your boots are wrecked beyond repair, and caribou will be scarce until the warmer weather comes and the mosquitoes drive them near our camps. Stop hunting, and I will make you new boots with stouter soles for the summer months."

It was not only my boots that troubled her. She believed that an evil demon, haunting the hills to the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

776 123 westward where I generally made my excursions, trapped and destroyed the solitary hunter. In this very district, many years before, it had spirited away her first husband, who had vanished without leaving a trace. So when I, too, vanished for sixteen hours one day she became greatly alarmed, and entreated Ikpuck to lead a searching party. Willy-nilly, I had to join the fishermen and let my dogs go hungry.

226 The fish soon commenced to bite less freely in the surrounding lakes, and some of the men wandered far-
224 ther afield. Ikpuck then shot a caribou eight miles
361 away near the shore of Lake Ever-Frozen. Instead
484 of packing it home, he buried it in the snow and advised
[492] moving our camp to its vicinity. Every one welcomed his suggestion and prepared back-packs for the dogs, since the melting of the snow on the ridges rendered
[251] our sleds useless until autumn came round again. We concealed in stone cairns the dried fish we had accumulated, raised the empty sleds on stone pillars, and piled on top of them all the stone lamps and other articles too heavy or too bulky to carry around with us during the summer; then, packing on our backs the remainder of the equipment, we abandoned the Lake of Dancing and marched away to our new home.

484 It was a picturesque sight, this train of people and
482 dogs staggering over hill and lake under burdens almost equal in size and weight to themselves. The men carried the tents and weapons, the women the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

of which we shot. The heads and limbs we buried in the snow to collect the following day; The Runner took one of the carcasses on his back, I took the other, and Leaf carried the two hares. After we had proceeded thus for about a mile The Runner changed burdens with his wife, who accepted without a murmur. I promptly changed with him, and a few minutes after with Leaf again, giving her back the hares. But packing was still a new experience to me, and though I reached the camp without mishap, I deeply rued my gallantry the next morning when a thousand pains shot through my neck every time I turned my head.

A fortnight's fishing exhausted the bay and compelled us to make another move. It mattered little which way we turned, for every ridge bounded a lake that contained both trout and salmon. But since the total catch would be greater if we scattered our forces and settled on different lakes the families separated. The Listener went south, The Chatterbox north, Parted-Hair north-east, and Ikpuck and The Runner east.

This dispersal of the individual families completed one half of the strange cycle through which the Eskimos passed year after year. They reacted to the seasons, to their constantly changing environment, more than most of the inhabitants of our globe. The problem of obtaining life's basic needs, food, clothing, and shelter, left little time for other thoughts; and the seals and caribou that furnished them with food, fur-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

into a paste with cold water it was more digestible than the half-raw fish on the drying-poles, and more palatable than saltless fish boiled over a smoky flame in a cupful of water. So for a week I ate nothing but pemmican. Gradually the dysentery lessened, my strength began to return, and, though the intolerable thirst continued, there was hope of a permanent recovery if in some way we could improve our diet.

I talked the matter over with Ikpuck. He could understand my dislike of raw fish, but not its effect on my health, unless, indeed, my guardian spirit had forbidden its consumption. Yet he would gladly do anything to aid my recovery. It was the end of July; the fur of the caribou was in its prime, and the fishing season nearing its close. He had intended to pass the remainder of the summer wandering in the hills to the north-east, where caribou were numerous but fuel scarce; however, seeing that I might eat nothing but cooked food, we could move southward toward the coast if I wished, and travel over plains amply clothed with heather and willow. We agreed to adopt this second plan and communicated the decision to our companions.

A snow-storm, not an unusual occurrence even in the height of summer, delayed our departure a few days; but as soon as the snow melted again we packed all our fish to the Lake of Dancing and cached it with our other possessions. Then we turned southward, away

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

of sealskin, over which was lashed a pair of stout cords of twisted sinew. It was the sinew that gave the weapon its spring, for the frame was merely driftwood picked up on the beach, or spruce of the poorest quality. Such crude materials, added to crude workmanship, made the balance very uneven, so that although the maximum range of the weapon was about one hundred and twenty-five yards, its effective range hardly exceeded twenty-five. Indeed, I have seen The Listener miss a caribou that passed not more than fifteen yards away.

While the adults amused themselves at archery beside the camp the children played their own games on the slope above. They set up fences of turf to enclose fictitious caribou, and dug shallow pits from which to shoot their arrows; or they marked out a line of snow-huts with pebbles, and filled the dance-house with imaginary singers. Thus the occupations of the parents were the pastimes of the children, who learned in play their duties of after years.

Twenty-five miles west of the sand-plain, at Bad Creek, we left The Listener's wife to dry our stock of meat, promising to rejoin her before many days; with lightened packs we then pushed on toward Mt. Arrowsmith, camping near a crag of diabase twelve feet high that formed a landmark visible for many miles. Here we encountered a violent snow-storm that continued unabated for two days. We spent the first in our sleep-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

222 415 [137] women and children gathered large quantities of these seeds, stuffing them into small bags of the strangest varieties and materials. Some were worn-out stockings of squirrel or caribou fur; two were made from the membranes that had lined the hearts of our polar bears; but the most curious of all were bottle-shaped pouches sewn from the webbed feet of red-throated loons. Whatever their shape, all alike found their way into the dog-packs, where they added one more item to our varied impedimenta.

484 Our loads had increased considerably since those early days in August when, leaving the hills, we had [231] commenced this ceaseless quest of caribou. Icehouse, it is true, had no longer two small puppies tearing at the back of her hair while ostensibly nestling in the hood of her jacket; they were sturdy urchins now, able to keep pace with the other dogs and to steal the meat [251] from our packs. But in addition to her usual burden [482] she carried fifteen pounds of tallow, her share of the caribou back fat that the women had boiled down for [482] ease of transport. Each man had several green caribou hides rolled round his pack, and Ikpuck and The Runner bore the two bear skins, which alone weighed [126] upward of fifty pounds. My own pack was unchanged save for two extra caribou hides, and an increase in the thickness of my herbarium from two inches to six.

775 Late one afternoon, as we skirted the edge of a lake, we came to an old camping-site where a woman's knife,

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

the female, often returned, to be impaled on his long-handled fish-spear.

In the meantime I kept watch for the caribou which now showed signs of migrating. At first they came in small numbers every second or third day; but soon more frequently, until as many as fifteen or twenty passed daily near our camp. Ikpuck, giving up his sealing and fishing, joined me in the chase, and together we shot about forty animals, although we carried to camp only the hides and whatever meat we needed for immediate consumption. Some of the carcasses we cached under heavy stones, others we dropped into shallow ponds where the covering of ice would protect them from the foxes. Those that we buried under stones froze within a few hours, for the cold weather was an admirable refrigerator; and those that we submerged in the icy water preserved equally well, because the ponds were free of bacteria and too shallow for fish. We planned to recover these carcasses, of course, before the water froze to the bottom, or the ice became so thick that we could not extricate them without much labour. I earmarked twelve for the station at Bernard Harbour, where there would be no fresh meat apart from the caribou that might be shot during this migration; all the rest went to my family, who for two months longer had to live on fish and caribou alone.

Caribou, like salmon-trout, have their breeding sea-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

nourished Icehouse wriggled in her bag for several minutes before she tumbled, like an enormous chrysalis, head foremost onto the floor.

We occupied a real snow-hut at the Lake of Dancing, one that had been erected by our companions a week or more before. Here we dismantled our caches of dried meat and dried fish, and recovered my sled, the big spring tent, and all the other things we had deposited at this place in the early days of summer. Foxes, worming their way through sundry chinks and crevices in the stones, had destroyed all the sinew fishing-lines; fortunately we had plenty of cod-line that could take its place. More serious was the destruction of the white-bellied caribou hides from which Icehouse had intended to make some finely ornamented costumes for the winter dances; but I assuaged her grief by promising to purchase other hides for her when the tribes reassembled at the sealing-grounds. We sighted one of the marauding foxes near our camp, and lured it within range by squeaking like a young bird; but Ikpuck's bullet struck only the ground between its legs, and, though deluged with snow, it escaped without injury.

After fishing in various lakes for a few days with little success we overtook our companions at the source of a creek that flows into Dryad Harbour. They had abandoned all further hunting and fishing on the land under the pressure of colder weather and were return-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

winter months; as soon as they left this place for the sealing-grounds they might sew no more until the sun returned at the end of January. The men brought in the pokes of blubber cached on Read Island six months before, and the carcasses of the caribou shot during the migration just ended; in idle moments they repaired their sealing weapons or helped their wives to scrape the caribou hides.

The monotony of this new life affected the children much more than the adults. Throughout the summer they had shared our hunting and fishing, packed their burdens like the rest of us, and played an active rôle in every enterprise. They had gained a status in those months far beyond their years. Now they were reduced to children again, helpless dependents whose principal duty was to carry messages from one hut to another. Their bows and arrows, which had secured us many a duck and ptarmigan, were useless now that the birds had flown, and their fishing-lines lay idle in the family dunnage-bags, buried away until another spring. Little wonder, then, that they chafed under the confinement and tedium of a sedentary life, where no new playmates, no dances, no visitors from other tribes, breathed fresh life into our humdrum circle. A strange irritability seemed to taint their merry, carefree natures, and they wept over trifles that a month before would have passed unheeded.

Icehouse told Jennie one morning to brush the snow

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

of the dog for a few days in return for a small butcher-knife.

Shoals of salmon (or, to speak more correctly, salmon-trout), numbering from ten to forty fish in each shoal, had migrated up this stream to spawn in a lake at its source; and a little later in the season young fry, two years old, would migrate from the lake to the sea. The natives captured them by a very simple and effective method. They had built three barriers of stones across the stream, leaving narrow openings in the two that lay nearest the sea and completely closing the highest; whenever a shoal gathered in the upper chamber they blocked its entrance and stabbed the struggling fish with long, three-pointed spears. Nearly a hundred salmon, each weighing from three to twelve pounds, lay spread out on flat boulders around the camp, or hung from horizontal poles; and as many more were cached away under piles of stones. The migration seemed now to have ended, and the two families planned to go inland in search of caribou as soon as they could store away the fish that were still undried.

A larger band of Eskimos who were camped behind Cape Krusenstern had built their weir, not at the mouth of a stream, but in a shallower spot three miles inland near its outlet from a lake. Four and even six shoals of salmon had been ascending each day during the peak of the migration, and a fish that once entered the trap rarely escaped. The shoals then gradually

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

diminished in number, and for two days none at all appeared. The natives, who had nothing to do except deposit their fish in caches as it dried, were lounging around their tents, enjoying the halcyon days of early summer—that week or fortnight, all too brief, when life seemed a glorious holiday. Food was abundant in their camp, and the air so warm that they could sleep in the open air, hardly molested as yet by the clouds of mosquitoes that would shortly darken the sky and attack every living creature, man and beast alike.

Humour is never lacking in an Eskimo community, especially during days of idleness. As the women were gossiping inside a tent, one of the men called out that a shoal had entered the weir. The gathering dispersed in an instant; for although theoretically food was shared in common, the family that gathered the largest store always fared better than the rest, and enjoyed greater prestige. The women, therefore, rushed for their spears and hurried down to the stream. But as they collected on the brink and eagerly scanned the empty water, loud guffaws from the men behind advised them of the hoax, and crestfallen, even amid their laughter, they slowly retreated to their tents again.

About six o'clock the next morning, while the camp still slept, I rose to light our breakfast fire. A woman appeared at the door of her tent, and after gazing tranquilly around, picked up her fish-spear and

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

Ikpuck received tools of various kinds, a high-powered binocular to aid his hunting, two seines that would supplement his fish-spear and fishing-rod, a light cloth tent to replace the heavy one of skin that he packed all summer on his back, and last, but not least, a Peterborough canoe. Of all these gifts the canoe perhaps pleased him most. We used it immediately to freight most of his dried fish over to a small island that was inaccessible to foxes and other animals until the sea froze over again.

It was melancholy to reflect, during these last days, how little I had done, how little I could do, to ensure the welfare of my family during the years to follow. Nature had not been kind to their land. The winters were long and severe, the summers too short and too late in their arrival to permit the growth of fruits or cereals. Isolated from the great world outside, my parents, like all their tribesmen, could maintain themselves only on what the country itself provided—meat and fish in the spring and summer, fish and meat again in the fall and winter. Permanent homes they had none; life was a perpetual wandering in search of food, a wandering that ended only with death. The winter's twilight had shown me their blurred forms dragging the over burdened sleds from one sealing-ground to another to escape the threat of famine; and the midnight sun had shone on husband, wife, and little daughter, weighted down with heavy packs, stumbling over